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No. 201.

LIFE-HEROES.

BY FRANK M. IMBIE.

Yes, the intense, sweet dream is gone, is over;
I've burst away from Passion's maddening thrill;
Once more I stand a pure and *perfect* woman,
Tried proven; tempted, yet all stainless still.
Two hard to bid his fierce, unfriendly nature
Drink passioned love in chary, tiny sips;
Twa-harder still, the one he madly worshipped,
Should dash the chalice brimming from his lips.
This day, too, in fierce, twin battle,
Unto me to the blunders, sinless part;
But oh, so hard, to coldly chide the erring
When error comes not from a wicked heart.
Tis end to note the keen, brief joy-pelicans
When Passion, wave-like, leaves the boing o'er,
So sad to witness the remorse-filled hours,
That blast the tried soul to its tenderest core.
Tis true, we talk of intent, deeply-stinging:
Assume high trage; scorn the tempter's plea;
Oh, man, is that our life's ennobling mission—
Or, Christ-like, help the shackled—tempted, free?
I know, in years to come, the sweet soul vision
Will come to him, when I, a firm friend stood,
While baffling yarning's dangerous syren-pleading,
Restored his faith in perfect womanhood.



At that instant a face appeared at the window, with two large staring eyes that fixed on Crosier.

The Silver Serpent: on, THE MYSTERY OF WILLOWOLD.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.

AUTHOR OF "YOUNG STEALING A HEART," "IRON AND GOLD," "TRAIL OF CARIBS," "RED SCORPION," "HERCULES, THE HUNCHBACK," "BLAMING TALISMAN," "CAT AND TIGER," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMER IN THE STORM.

A LARGE house near a straight, smooth road, approached by a narrow carriage-way beneath tall trees.

It was night—a stormy night in the month of August; lightning flashing, thunder booming, and rain falling in drenching sheets, while the warning winds howled and shrieked as the gale swept on.

An aged woman sat in the brilliant parlor, listening, anon, to the fierce roaring without, and knitting vigorously on a pair of stockings.

Crouched on stools by her side, were two handsome children—a boy and girl—each with hair of gold and eyes of brown.

"Hark, how it blows! It's a fearful storm. Don't be afraid of the thunder, dears. How the trees are bending and straining now!—hear them crack. But, there's no danger for such innocents as you. Don't tremble."

"Can papa and mamma be out in it?" queried the boy, hugging closer to her knees.

"No, I guess not. They're safe housed, be sure. But, I'm afraid they won't be home till late—Ha! what's that?"

"I thought I heard wheels," the boy whispered.

A step on the porch startled her. Then there was a loud knock on the door.

"That's not papa!" exclaimed the youthful pair.

"No. Let us see."

She arose to answer the summons. A chill blast—chill even in that summer month—soughed in as she opened the door; and on the threshold, just discernible in the gloom, stood the figure of a man.

"Your pardon, madam," spoke a deep voice; "I am drenched and tired. Can I find a resting-place here?"

"Yes. Come in—come in. Don't stand in the rain."

"I am nearly drowned!" he declared, stepping in.

He threw aside his hat and cape, and, stalking into the parlor, drew a chair up to the glowing hearth.

"A fire to dry oneself is isn't unhandy such a night," said the woman, returning after re-bolting the door.

"Welcome enough," he acquiesced, briefly.

"Are you mistress of the house?"

"No, no. I'm but a nurse for these two children. Colonel Paul Gregor and his wife went to town to-day, and I'm alone."

"Good."

"Eh?"

"What a flood!"—jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

"Yes, it's a great rain. They may not be back this night on account of it. Ha!—what a flash that was." She clapped her hands to her eyes as a stream of lightning fairly danced around them, making dim the light of the lamp.

Even the man started with a thrill of fear.

"Nurse! Nurse!" cried the children, together, as they nestled to her with pallid faces and trembling forms.

"Hush!"—soothingly. "Don't be frightened, dears—don't be frightened."

"Be brave, little ones," said the stranger; but his voice contained no assurance, for it was deep almost to harshness.

Then broke the terrific peal of thunder outside. The electric shaft had riven a stately oak not a hundred yards from the house, and the report that followed the flash shook the building to its foundations.

Let us look at this stranger.

He was tall and slender—not thin, but lithe, supple, elastic. His face was singularly white, with a complexion pure as a woman's. The eyes were dark, hard, glittering, yet withal their piercing glance, at times wandering absently—like twin sparks that glow and smolder alternately. From the sharp-angled cheeks grew side whiskers of glossy black, pliant as fibrous wire, for they were twirled downward to long points. His hands were slim, effeminate, pink nailed; on one finger he wore a curious and costly ring—and this ring flashed and shone as he slowly worked and rubbed his hands entwiningly, rested his elbows on the chair arms, and stretched his long limbs, with their narrow, pointed shoes, before the fire. His tone of speech, like the changefulness of his gaze, was first agreeable, then repellent, next indefinable, finally thoughtful. The index to

his character was his countenance: now sly, presently stern, at one moment blank, and again varying namelessly.

The storm howled on. Nurse Mary resumed her seat and her knitting, and the stranger maintained a moody silence. The boy and girl regarded him distrustfully—two pair of eyes watching with instinctive dislike.

"Have you come very far, sir?" she inquired, at length.

"Yes. I was told, at a tavern some distance back, that the city lay but a mile beyond this place. I tried to reach it ere the storm broke."

"Ah! you came from the west."

"Maybe. I don't know west from east in such blackness."

"And you came, perhaps, from—"

"From the railroad station; choosing, rather, to take a short cut than wait for connection at the city suburbs," he glanced covetously at her, to note whether the explanation once was satisfactory.

Her knitting lay idly in her lap; she was leaning slightly forward, and speaking as if aware by her own earnestness.

"Interesting!" enunciated the man, briefly, giving his chair a lurch higher. "Tell me more about this, madam."

His face affected blank wonderment; but there was an unmistakable keenness about the twinkling eyes that might have betrayed to another more suspicious than she an important attraction.

"You've never been here, I judge, else you'd know the whole story."

"No. I come from a distant city. My name is Varlan Crosier—from profession a lawyer. Do not let me interrupt you. You were telling me of Willowold, or began, which is the same. Did you know the names of the parties living there when this happened, whatever it was—if any thing happened at all?"

"Ha! you heard snakes?"

"Did you see any thing when you left the edge of the pines and struck the main road?"

"I looked neither to the right nor to the left; but I might have seen, for then the clouds were not over the moon."

"You did not see Willowold?"

"Willowold?" he repeated, thoughtfully, pausing in a careless way, though the dark orbs were sparkling with interest. "What is Willowold?"

"A monument of crime!" she answered, in a hushed strain.

"Oh! it is a house, then?" and brighter scintillated the cunning eyes.

"It was," nurse emphasized, in a voice that sunk lower. "It was a house, but it now stands in grim ruins—dashed to pieces, they say, by just such a storm as this one of to-night."

"Sblood!" half aloud; and then: "This hurricane is sweeping every thing. The rain increases. But why do you ask me if I saw Willowold?"

"She shook her head mysteriously.

"It's an evil place, sir."

"Some wonderful story, eh?" exclaimed the dark stranger, wheeling his chair around.

"Yes."

"Pray, madam, can it be possible that you have a specter-haunted ruins so close? What? Are you not afraid?—and on such a night?"

At that instant a face appeared at the window, with two large staring eyes that fixed on Crosier. But it was not seen by the nurse, be-

cause it was behind her, nor by the children, who were dozing with their heads on her knees. It was plainly visible to him, as he sat fronting in that direction, and he answered, by a nod, the quick sign of a waving hand, that shook beside the face which pressed the panes.

His worm-like brows knit in a momentary frown; but the movement and the frown were also unobserved by the woman, who happened just then to glance at the window behind her—at the face behind the window, for it was there again, dripping with wet, staring, and weeping a beseeching expression.

"I shall dart after him presently!" he snarled, within, while his lips drew back, his whiskers stood out, his teeth gritted, and his orbs blazed.

Then, when it was gone, ere she discovered him: "I want to know what became of the man and wife? Sounds! what became of Jules Willoughby, the apothecary's clerk?"

"They were never seen after leaving Willowold."

"Were not, eh?" twirling his whiskers to fine points as he eyed her.

"Jules Willoughby hasn't been heard of either. And now I think of it, the apothecary who employed him closed his store and disappeared somewhere about the same date."

"Did you ever see these people?" asked Crosier, now devoting both hands to one side of his whiskers, and twirling ardently on it, as he screwed up his mouth, elevated his brows, and gazed slantingly over one wrist.

"Well, no, not exactly. But I lived near by in the county, and heard so much that I'd know them the minute I set eyes on them."

"Oh! you are sure of that?" shifting the working fingers to the hair on the opposite cheek, and crossing his limbs. "You could identify this Wilise De Martine and his wife if you met them? Good. Maybe you will see them one of these days."

"I should not care to. If there's any truth in rumor, he was a bad man."

"But you forgot to tell me something," Crosier suggested, reversing his crossed limbs and proceeding to crack his knuckles one by one.

"I say that the beautiful Elise was rich?"

"Very, very rich. And it was all her own—money in bank, best of all, which was left by two grandfathers successively."

"Zounds! how convenient to boast of rich grandparents!" But the point. If Elise De Martine was an heiress in her own right—and she died by the sting of a serpent, which was no serpent, but a reptile of silver that crumbled at the touch of a stick—then where did her money go? Hey? Can you tell me that?"

"I never thought of it."

"Had she no one to leave her money to?"

"It seems to me the wills of both grandfathers constituted Wilise De Martine guardian of the funds, or something of that kind."

"Then he fell possessor of all?"

"It may be so."

"It may be so!"—sblood! how else could it be?" leaning forward with elbows on his knees, hands extended, and tapping the forefinger of one member on the palm of the other, emphatically.

"Every body loves money—you do, I do, your stabler, those children, then why not Wilise De Martine and his wife? He must have loved money, and tell me that he was a bad man."

"Was it not an object to obtain the wealth of Elise De Martine?"

"It may be so!"—sblood! how else could it be?" leaning forward with elbows on his knees, hands extended, and tapping the forefinger of one member on the palm of the other, emphatically.

"It could not be otherwise. Every body loves money—you do, I do, your stabler, those children, then why not Wilise De Martine and his wife? He must have loved money, and tell me that he was a bad man."

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He recovered himself in the passage of a moment, however, and said:

"Pardon. That tale of yours has affected me. I told you I was a coward in superstition. Let it rest. Well speak of other matters. You see, I am thrown on your hospitality for the night. I have had a weary tramp. If you can spare me a room, I may thank you in the morning, when I will also see the master and mistress of the house—Colonel Paul Gregor. I heard you call him."

"He was colonel in the Regulars. Yes; of course you can't go on in the storm. Shall I make you a cup of tea, sir?"

"No tea; I never drink it." somewhat shortly, and in that deep tone. "I have something better in my valise, which I threw down at the porch. I'll get it."

He went out to the porch, where he had cast down a small valise before entering the house. Grasping up the article, he did not immediately return.

"Hush, there, captain!" called a low, squeaky voice.

"Wynder, you dog!" he answered, advancing to the steps of the porch.

"Here I am, captain. Truly yours. Have some mercy; you don't know what a ducking I've had."

"Worth Wynder, you are a fool!"

"I know that, captain," and a vivid lightning flash just then discovered this second personage making a bow with his words, a pantomime slightly ridiculous there in the pouring rain.

"Why did you annoy me by looking through that window so often? I shall break your neck on some occasion when you anger me!"

"Then I shall not be disappointed, for I am expecting it."

"Hush! Speak lower, rascal!"

"But I say, how long are you going to keep me here? It's devilish wet. I've been twice to the flask in your valise, but it doesn't make me the more waterproof."

"Shh, shh!"

Varlan Crosier heard the nurse speaking to the children.

"Wait a minute, dears, while I go with this gentleman and show him a bed. I'll be back directly."

"Wynder, your ear—quick! Follow the light as it goes up stairs. You can tell my room by the rays from the window. Be beneath with your ladder, and all will go well. Fair me, and I'll—

"Depend upon me, captain. I'll follow the light," interrupted the figure.

Crosier rejoined the woman, and was conducted to a comfortable apartment in the second story of the house. He thanked her, bade her good-night, and was alone.

As she returned to the children, she thought she heard some one laugh—then a whistle, then a sound like the murmur of voices. But she attributed it to fancy, and seated herself once more near the hearth, on which blazed and crackled a fresh log.

"Are you going to sit up for papa and mamma?" asked the boy.

"Yes, child. If they come home to-night they'll want a bite and a sup. The storm's going down now, and maybe they'll be here. What was that?"

With the last words she started and gazed suspiciously toward the murky hallway. She heard a noise resembling the fall of a window-sash—and again that mysterious murmur, presently followed by a draught of air that smelled of the cold and damp of the night.

She arose, took up the lamp, went to the door, and stood for a few seconds in a listening attitude.

"Only the wind beneath the door," she thought; "only the gale in the trees and the rumble of the thunder. I feel strangely, though; as if all wasn't right. That man did not wear a pleasant face; it reminded me of the snake, the fox, and the wolf—all in one. I hope he means no harm. It is possible. Pshaw! am I growing foolish? Mary Dyke was not silly in her younger years." Then to the children: "Do you want to go to bed, dears?"

"Not till papa and mamma come," they answered.

"Come, lay your heads in my lap, then, and go to sleep."

The knitting needles paled their task, and a drowsy atmosphere settled round them.

The children repose calmly. The tempest was lulling; the thunder rolled gradually further off, and its hoarse, dull booming did not break the awesome spell that drew over them.

CHAPTER II.

THE STRUGGLE ON THE ROAD.

VARLAN CROSIER was not the only one who had been overtaken by the torrent of the storm.

About two miles up the road—whirling through the rivers of mud, reckless of danger, in the almost impenetrable blackness—a buggy was coming, at a furious rate; horse-hoofs clattering in and flinging the slush, and the animals flying like white specters in the tempest.

Inside the buggy, behind a high drawn water-dash, which hardly shielded them from the pelting rain, sat a lady and gentleman, rigid, silent, intent upon their speed, and the desire to gain shelter. Over the top of the dash he used the slender carriage-whip, whenever the lightning illuminated their surrounding, and the occasional glares were his only opportunity for seeing his course in advance.

But the flaming skies, nor the belching thunder, nor the roar of rain and wind, were not the sole absorbers of the man's mind; neither did the form of the woman—as it shrank in a terrified embrace to him—seem to enlist his notice. There were thoughts in his brain that burned and worried him much, which will be developed in due time.

On, on they went. At the end of a mile, the road ran beneath a dome of verdure—trees that bordered the side with high branches locked and interlaced in luxury, rendering more chaotic, if possible, the inkinness of the night.

Faster they sped. Again the whip stretched out, and snapped on the backs of the beasts; and tighter clung the lady round his neck.

"Unloose me," he snarled, with an effort to shake her off.

"Oh, Paul! Paul! it is terrible. I shall die of fright."

"Hands off, I say! How can I drive with a frightened woman hanging and whining on my neck? Ha! that was a bright flash!"

The lady screamed, as a blinding light played about them, followed quickly by a peal of deafening thunder—like a cannon report, or the clash of a thousand cymbals in their ears.

"Curse the horses! Why don't they get along?"

His companion trembled—he could feel her shivering as with an ague. Though the horses were goaded and galloping like runaway steeds he cursed their slowness, and plied the whip vigorously, while those burning thoughts grew hotter and hotter in his brain.

A quarter of a mile—half a mile—on, on at that fearful pace; a pace more hazardous than the peril from lightning or toppling trees. Timbers were falling in the woody depths; they could hear the crunch of splintered boughs amid the surge of elements; they knew not at

what moment some massive trunk might be riven and cast upon them, to crush, maul and destroy them.

"Paul! Paul! where are you?" screamed the woman, who was just recovering.

He was bounding in pursuit, but checked himself, and hurried to her side.

"So you are awake at last?"

"What does this mean? Did I swoon? Where have you been?"

"You swooned; and I had had a combat," growled he, feeling for her and assisting her to rise.

"A combat, Paul? With what?—with whom?"

"I was attacked by a ruffian—" "And left me lying in the filth?"

"Perdition was I to hold you, and be assassinated meantime? You are too choice. Mark ye: I have had a wrestle with—who do you imagine?"

"How can I guess?"

"With Jules Willoughby!" He announced it with a shiver.

"Jules Willoughby!" she exclaimed. "No! Impossible! He is dead!" and but for the murk that shrouded them, her white face might have been seen to grow still whiter.

There were lines of dread about her mouth, and a restless stare in her eyes, which told that she, as well as Colonel Paul Gregor, was preyed upon by the presence of Jules Willoughby—spoken of as an apothecary's clerk, and the former lover of deceased Elise De Martine, in our previous chapter.

Showing that there was something between Colonel Gregor and his wife and Jules Willoughby—something which alarmed them in connection with his unexpected appearance, or, rather, his presence without his appearance, and the significance of his attacking them under cover of the storm.

Miss Desmond laughed; she knew the business manager's contempt for the men whom he so cleverly used to advance his own interests.

"Well, I'll say what I came to say, and then get out and let you dress," continued Medham.

"Mr. Palmer presents his compliments to your company at a little supper as soon as you are ready; and he would like also to present to you an esteemed friend of his, Judge Bruyn, if he would be perfectly satisfied that she is, before the curtain goes up and they see her at all.

The people who pay come to be amused, and it doesn't take much to please them, either; and as for the critics, they are set of donkeys who wouldn't know good acting if they saw it."

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"Mr. Palmer presents his compliments to your company at a little supper as soon as you are ready; and he would like also to present to you an esteemed friend of his, Judge Bruyn, if he would be perfectly satisfied that she is, before the curtain goes up and they see her at all.

The people who pay come to be amused, and it doesn't take much to please them, either; and as for the critics, they are set of donkeys who wouldn't know good acting if they saw it."

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tion, the Judge proceeded to inquire regarding Miss Desmond.

"The lady in a dark walking-suit, with blonde hair? Ah, yes! I know her," the woman answered; "she is an actress, Miss Desmond, playing at Niblo's Garden now."

"Yes, I recognized her, and was somewhat astonished at seeing her here."

"She comes to see one of the prisoners."

"Indeed!" The Judge was again astonished.

"Yes, George Dominick—Gentleman George."

"Never heard of him."

"It's the first time that he has ever been arrested. He's an old offender though: bank-robber; a handsome, dashy fellow, perfect gentleman in appearance."

"Did he send for Miss Desmond?"

"Yes; we only got him eight before last; he's got an ugly wound in the shoulder. I should think that you would know me better than to attempt to treat me as a child or a sentimental school-girl."

"You do not believe in the 'old time,' then?"

"No; what is past is past; let it rest," she answered.

"It was pleasant though," he said, reflectively.

"The end was not pleasant," she retorted, quite bitterly.

The prisoner looked at her curiously for a moment.

"That remark, I suppose, was not intended to be complimentary to me," was the prisoner's half-serious remark.

George lay extended upon the narrow bed.

His eyes were closed as if in sleep, but the convulsive movement of the muscles of the mouth told that he was not in the embrace of the drowsy god, but wide awake and muttering to himself.

"Will she come?"

Thrice at least had he put the question at intervals.

It was the same old story—old since the world was young. The eastern king who claimed that a woman was at the bottom of all mischief in this world, was not so far wrong, after all.

"She must come!" he declaimed, with fierce and fiery utterance, opening his eyes suddenly and staring wildly around him as though he expected to see the face of the woman of whom he spoke, gazing at him from some dark corner of the prison-cell. "She will not dare to refuse to come," he muttered, defiantly, after quite a long pause. "She is bold and reckless enough, but she will not dare to provoke me. She knows me too well, and she has a whole-some dread of my wrath, cunning and desperate as she is. Let me see," and then the prisoner pulled the ends of his long, blonde mustache in a thoughtful manner. "She will receive my note by noon, then it will take her an hour or so to reflect whether to obey or not. She will think the matter over, see that the consequences attending a refusal may be very unpleasant, and decide that it is better to be my friend than to provoke my enmity, and then will come; so I may expect her about three or four o'clock this afternoon." And with this conclusion, Gentleman George turned over restlessly on his side.

The imprisoned man was lying on the outside of the bed, fully dressed, with the exception of his coat which lay on the little stool at the head of the bed. As he turned upon the bed, he felt a sudden, sharp twinge of pain shoot through his shoulder, and was thus abruptly reminded of his wound.

"Curse the scratch!" he muttered, fretfully;

"I wish that I knew the name of that doctor that Hero brought the other night. The fellow had a touch as light as a feather. If I knew where he could be found I would send for him to attend to this matter. I hate the very sight of these police surgeons."

And then, speaking the name of his wife, brought up a new chain of ideas.

"It would be cursed awkward if Hero and this woman should meet!" he said, musically; "it would be apt to put me in a precious hole."

"Hero, patient as she is, would be apt to make a terrible row, and as for the other one, she would only be too glad of an excuse to throw me. I must take care that neither one surprises the other here. By Jove! between the two women, I should suffer. Hero already has a suspicion that she has a rival, and I must be careful that she does not succeed in proving the suspicion to be truth."

The entrance of one of the prison officials interrupted the meditations of the prisoner.

"A lady wishes to see you, Mr. Dominick," the man announced.

The heart of Gentleman George gave a great leap. His message had been promptly answered.

"What sort of a looking woman is she?" he asked, in quite a careless manner as if it was but an indifferent matter.

"Rather smallish in size, light hair."

"Well, I suppose that I may as well see her," Dominick said, rising to a sitting posture, perfectly satisfied that the visitor was the one he had expected.

"Let her come up then?" the official questioned.

"Yes; and, by the way, if it is not asking too much, can you arrange it so that if any one else should come to see me while the lady is here, they will not come up until she is gone?"

"Oh, certainly," the officer replied; "that is simple enough. I will leave word down-stairs that you are engaged for the present and do not wish to be disturbed."

"Thanks; I shall be very much obliged if you will have the kindness to do so; and if my lawyer should happen to come, I don't expect him until one or two o'clock though—tell him that I shall not be engaged long, and request him to wait."

"All right; what lawyer is it?"

"Counselor Watt."

"The 'Three-decker'! I know him. I'll attend to it for you." And with this assurance the official withdrew.

"Aha!" cried Gentleman George, gleefully, as the cell door closed after the officer; "there's no chain in the world so strong as fear; boast ed love is a silken thread compared to it. Her prompt compliance with my request proves that I still possess my old power over her."

Within a minute, the prison official returned, accompanied by Eileen Desmond, the actress.

The officer politely conducted the lady into the cell and then withdrew.

Miss Desmond was dressed very plainly, as indeed was usual with her, but the dark dress only seemed to enhance her wondrous beauty.

She stood just within the cell, looking at the man whom she had come to visit with a face that was as expressionless as a waxen mask.

George rose gallantly from the bed and advanced to her with outstretched hand.

"You are very prompt indeed!" he exclaimed, as he took the thin, white hand within his own. "permit me to thank you for your kindness."

The cold hand that he clasped so tightly seemed like a nervous piece of flesh rather than the hand of a fresh, young woman.

"My furniture is rather scanty here," he continued, with a glance around at the narrow prison cell, "but it is the fashion of this hotel. You have your choice between the bed and the stool for a seat; which will you have?"

"The side of the bed will do," she said, coldly and quietly.

George retreated backward a few steps, and Miss Desmond, without further remark, seated herself upon the foot of the low bed. Then George brought the stool and sat down by her side.

"Here at your feet, as in the old time," he said, with a tender expression in his voice; a trick which was utterly lost upon the cold and unimpassible Miss Desmond, as she only curled her lip and looked at him in the most disdainful manner.

George watched her for a moment and then burst into a loud laugh.

"Sentiment is thrown away upon you, eh?" he said.

"Yes," she replied, cold as an iceberg; "I should think that you would know me better than to attempt to treat me as a child or a sentimental school-girl."

"You do not believe in the 'old time,' then?"

"No; what is past is past; let it rest," she answered.

"It was pleasant though," he said, reflectively.

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It was the same old story—old since the world was young. The eastern king who claimed that a woman was at the bottom of all mischief in this world, was not so far wrong, after all.

Miss Desmond looked the prisoner straight in the eyes, her face a face of wax as far as any expression was concerned, but she did not reply.

"Am I right in my conjecture?" he asked.

"I should think that your own heart would be able to answer that question without the necessity of referring to me," she replied, very coolly and very calmly.

"And you have not the highest possible opinion of me?" he continued.

"You are quite right in that," was the calm response.

"And yet you came promptly at my request?"

"Because I am willing to forget the wrong you have done me, and desire to aid you if I can." And that is the reason, eh?" George said, a peculiar expression upon his face.

"Yes, what other reason should there be?" she demanded, her manner a decided contrast to what it had been.

"I'll tell you what the other reason is," he returned, his bold, blue eyes fixed searching on the face of the woman. "You are afraid that I shall publish to the world the relationship that existed between Miss Ellen Desmond, the popular actress, who is nightly filling one of the largest theaters in the country with an overcrowded audience, that goes away raving of the youth, beauty and talent that they have seen, and George Dominick, better known to police officials as Gentleman George, the bank-robber, confidence-man and thorough-paced scoundrel—the man who lives by his wits and trades on the weakness of human nature, who believes that 'property is robbery,' and acts on that motto."

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 193.)

NADIA, THE RUSSIAN SPY;

The Brothers of the Starry Cross.

BY CAPT. FREDERICK WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE RED RAJAH," "THE SEA OAT," "THE
ROCK RIDER," "DOUBLE-DEATH," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PRISONER.

The Highland piper, from his lengthy, brawny frame, was a swift and powerful swimmer. Moreover, his bare legs gave him a great advantage over a swimmer incumbered with a hussar's equipment.

Twenty strokes he was alongside of the other, had seized him by the pelisse, and had his grip on him," as he phrased it.

That once accomplished the other struggled no more. Indeed it turned out that he was a mere child in the grasp of the stony piper. He submitted in perfect silence, when Sandy drew his dirk and hissed out:

"Not a word, or I'll slit yer wame, mon."

Then the Highlander dropped his feet to the ground, and dragged his passive and silent prisoner to the bank.

There he looked up, for the first time, and found that the current had carried them both under the dark arch of the bridge, on which he heard voices.

Sandy McPherson halted by the abutment and listened. The two vedettes on the bridge were talking to each other, and he fancied they might have heard the splashing in the stream.

He held the point of the dirk to the throat of his prisoner, with a significant pressure of his other hand on the latter's shoulder, and continued to listen.

A stir in the grass beside him, and a low groan, showed him the whereabouts of his late Cossack prisoner, and the piper made but one step forward, dragging the supposed Hussar off with him. Then he set his huge foot on the Cossack's throat, and gave it a very significant squeeze.

The hint sufficed. The Cossack lay still.

At that moment the rumbling of guns commenced once more, and the rapid click of hoofs announced that more cavalry was trotting down to the bridge.

Sandy dragged his second prisoner away, covered by the noise, and hurried up the bank to where he had left Pichot.

He found the latter standing by a fallen tree.

"Coom, mon, we manin be ganging" he said, in a low voice. "The enemy are advancing, and I'll ha'e to rin hame."

The Zouave made no objection, and taking their silent prisoner between them, the two comrades started up the hill at a rapid pace.

They were comparatively careless about noise now, for the rumble of artillery and the murmur of troops was so great and near by that it drowned their rustling in the bushes.

In ten minutes' hard climbing they had reached the top of the bank, and stopped to rest. Below them they could distinctly hear the orders and counter-orders, that told of some movement going on in the valley of the Tebrernaya.

Horses were galloping to and fro on the further bank, guns rumbling along, and the stamping of animals here and there, with the sudden cessation of rumble in places, and the click of iron chains, told the veterans the whole story.

Presently the rumbling ceased, and Sandy whispered:

"They ha'e gone into battery, Peesho. What d'ye mak' of that?"

Pichot threw himself on his face at the edge of the cliff, and listened. The dull murmur of voices was almost hushed, but he could hear a muffled trampling of feet on the hollow stone bridge. He jumped up and spoke, in a grave tone:

"They ha'e gone into battery, Peesho. What d'ye mak' of that?"

"Nadia is here, and will soon be on her way to you. Beware of Gorloff. I killed one of his spies yesterday, looking over my desk. He has found out that I send you the news. I bury the station

"Mon ami, infantry is coming over the bridge. We must hurry back. There is going to be a surprise."

"So I'm thinkin'," said the piper. "It's unco lucky that the mink's sac theek, or we might have a fair sight o' trouble to escape on this plain. Coom, Peesho."

The comrades again stole away to return to camp; and as they left the vicinity of the valley, so did the nimirum die away. When they had gone a quarter of a mile it was inaudible, and a stillness, as of death, had settled over the Inkerman Plateau.

The three continued their way toward what they thought was the direction of the English lines; but the fog was so dense, and the night so dark, in spite of a faint moon in her last quarter, that it was the merest guess-work.

They walked on for nearly an hour, their prisoner being still silent, till Sandy of a sudden put out his foot and stumbled and appeared headlong down a declivity.

The piper uttered an involuntary shout, and came down on hands and knees, grasping at bushes and tufts of grass in vain.

He was on the side of a steep declivity, and could not stop his course, rolling over and over down a rugged slope, till he came souse into a deep pool of water at the bottom, out of which he swam at last, a sadder and a wetter man, to find himself in an unknown country, where towering hills were all round him; except on one side, where a grassy plain stretched toward Balaklava.

Sandy McPherson had fallen over the edge of the Inkerman cliffs, where they ran into the Sapouya Ridge, and had been lucky enough to save his neck and tumble into the lines of the French corps of observation under Bosquet.

Not that Sandy had any such idea at first, for he was too much bewildered with his sudden fall to realize any thing, but, a moment later, he was haled by a sharp voice in French, and the click of a cocked musket enforced the words:

"Halt! Qui va là?"

"Deed, then, mousieur, and it's an ugly puer-Hieland laddie, and I dinna ken if his banes are a' haill or no," said the piper, rufusly.

"And who ya be, mousieur?"

"He could see no one, but the French voice cried furiously:

"Sacr-r-e-lets de coeur! Silence! Qui va là?"

Sandy remembered then that French sentries are apt to shoot very quick, and he mustered up all the French he knew.

"Am! Am! Am! Ecosse!"

"Avance, Ecosse, et donnez la consigne," said the stern voice, and Sandy groped his way through the fog, and beheld the turban and capote of a Zouave, as the latter covered him threateningly.

Sandy was in a predic

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With this issue we give the opening chapters of

THE SILVER SERPENT;

The Mystery of Willowold.

BY A. P. MORRIS, JR.,
AUTHOR OF "Y'TOL," "STEALING A HEART," ETC.

And shall, in a short time, commence:

WOLFGANG,

The Robber of the Rhine,

BY CAPT. FREDK. WHITTAKER,
AUTHOR OF "THE RED JAHAN," "THE SEA CAT,"
"THE ROCK RIDER," ETC., ETC.

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Our Arm-Chair.

Our Idea.—“Young America,” out in Haarlem, writes us a chatty letter about matters in his district, telling how the SATURDAY JOURNAL won its circulation there by the force of its fine stories, etc., etc. We are always pleased with these pleasant words from readers, and though we can not, of course, answer them, are none the less their friend. It is one of the publisher's and editor's most encouraging compensations to receive from patrons of the paper the evidence of approval which everywhere greets the JOURNAL. From all sections come these evidences. We are rapidly taking a steadfast hold upon American homes and eager for that fireside audience out of which are to spring the future true men and women of the Great Republic. The transient, flash and dash audience is not ours; we make no overtures to the “fast” or dissipated creatures of society; we pay no feasts for those who crave forbidden fruits; but, instead, we entertain, amuse, instruct and delight by the pure work of pure pens, calling to our aid authors who can be trusted; and, with a faith in the principle that “the best is now the best in the end,” shall continue to “fight it out on that line” always.

A Sea Monster.—In Mr. Whittaker's SATURDAY JOURNAL serial, *The Sea Cat*, the reader was introduced to an enormous cuttle-fish or sea devil (*octopus*), whose existence is indeed no myth. Readers of the romance may have thought, perhaps, that the author used a “romancer's license” in making the terrible creature large enough to invade a ship's deck with its horrible arms, to seize and drag overboard its prey, but that act has so many parallels in the history of the sea that the author might cite a score of authorities to defend his delineation.

We have a verification of the power of this creature in the narrative of an experience, off the coast of Newfoundland, near St. John's. It appears, from a letter written by the Rev. Mr. Harvey, of St. John's, Newfoundland, to Mr. Dawson, Principal of McGill College, Montreal, that on the 26th of October, two fishermen who were out in a small boat observed some object floating on the water at a short distance, which they supposed to be a sail or the *debris* of a wreck. On reaching it one of the men struck it with his “gaff,” when immediately it showed signs of life and reared a parrot-like beak, which they said was as big as a six-gallon keg, with which it struck the bottom of the boat twice. It then shot out from about its head two huge, livid arms, and began to twine them round to a boat. One of the men seized a small ax and cut off both arms as they lay over the gunwale, whereupon the fish backed off to a considerable distance and ejected an immense quantity of ink fluid, that darkened the water for a great distance around.

The men saw it fall for a short time afterward, and observed its tail in the air, which they thought to be 13 feet across. They estimated the body to be 60 feet in length and five feet in diameter, of the same shape and color as the common squid, and moving in the same way as the squid, both backward and forward. One of the arms which the men brought ashore was unfortunately destroyed, but a clergyman who saw it assured Mr. Harvey that it was ten inches in diameter and six feet in length. The other arm had six feet of its length cut off before leaving St. John's; the remainder, which measured 13 feet in length, is but three inches in circumference, except at the extremity, where it broadens like an oar to six inches in circumference.

As usual in the cuttle-fish, the under surface of the extremity of the arm is covered with sucking disks, the largest of which are an inch and a quarter in diameter. The men estimated that they left about 10 feet of the arm attached to the body of the fish, which would make it about 35 feet long. A photograph of the fragments of the arms and some of the disks were sent to Mr. Dawson, who exhibited them at the meeting of the Montreal Natural History Society. A trustworthy witness informed Mr. Harvey that in the winter of 1870 the bodies of two cuttle-fishes were cast ashore on the coast of Newfoundland, measuring 30 and 45 feet respectively.

I WOULDN'T.

You've felt cross sometimes, now haven't you? and your best friends have said or done something that has not entirely agreed with you, haven't they? In your heart you have vowed vengeance, and have felt like an en-

raged tiger cat or a pent-up volcano, and thought you would give those same individuals a bit of your mind. Now, I wouldn't do it; no, indeed, I wouldn't, for it will not do you or any one else the least particle of good. It is really dreadful to think how many friendships have been severed, and how many lives made unhappy, by our ebullitions of temper. A kind word is often the cause of gaining us friends staunch and true, while a cross one has lost us not only friends but has made us unhappy as well.

Instead of expending the vials of your wrath on those who have offended you, wouldn't it be better if you were to go away all by yourself, and write down all the good and evil words said of you, and the good and evil deeds done toward you by others? When you have counted these all over, you will find the good will outweigh the evil; so throw the records of the evil into the cooking-stove, but treasure up the good in your heart; you'll feel far happier for so doing; but if you go on treasuring up every trifle you will have a most miserable time over it; and, while you are wondering what it is that makes this world so cold and dreary, you are one of the very causes of its being so. I wouldn't act in that manner, were I in your place; friends are better than enemies, any day; “it's better to be loved than hated;” it's better to forgive than bear malice. Am I not right?

“But, Eve,” when you come to think of how one's goodness is so little cared for, and how friends, whom you have done so much for, have turned the cold shoulder on you, it isn't quite so easy to carry your advice into practice.”

But, you *mustn't* think of it; you must forget it; you must firmly resolve that, from this time forth and forevermore, you will banish such thoughts from your mind. It is not going to do you one particle of good to keep the idea of man's ingratitude to man” in your head. Take a more cheerful view of life, its surroundings, and of those who go to people the world in which we live. Are we so good to ourselves, so free from censure, that we wonder that others are not the same?

Ingratitude! Why, we are ungrateful ourselves not to be willing to forgive and forget; when we have so much need of being forgiven ourselves, and have so many peevishnesses that we would like to have forgotten.

If I heard Mrs. Jack say hateful things about Mrs. Gill, I wouldn't go and tell Mrs. Gill about it, for it would only bring about domestic broils; nor by my repeating their gossip would I be doing my duty. I don't like to get into hot water, and I keep out of it just as much as I possibly can. I don't want to be drawn into quarrels, or have my name brought in as a witness to any disturbances. Is there nothing else to talk about but scandal? Are we so utterly depraved and vile that our doings are so much commented upon, and our goodness never remarked?

If I go visiting I want to hear sense and not scandal—something edifying. I want the virtues of my neighbors extolled and not their vices brought before my vision. I wouldn't give much for the society of a person who is a scandal-monger, or one who believes that the surest road to heaven is through Gossiper's Lane.

They are so good themselves, in their own estimation, that others look like curiosities.

I was sitting at my desk the other day and a rap came at my door. “Unlock the door,” came from a female voice outside; “I've got just the nicest piece of gossip about—”

I waited to hear no more. I said I wouldn't unlock my door to all the gossip and scandal in the world; and I didn't and wouldn't.

EVE LAWLESS.

THE ENEMY OF ALL.

A TINY, pointed, poisoned weapon, which strikes in the dark and unawares—malice.

The weapon of the slanderer and backbiting, of the treacherous double-dealer who writes himself friend and is the most dangerous of enemies.

Oh, this deceit of appearance that fawns upon us, that flatters us, that wins our confidence only to betray us! Why cannot people be true to the form in which God created them?

Why must they blot its purity, gild it with flaunting hypocrisy, make of it a whitened scorpion by all uncleanliness within?

Rumor starts a whisper from some basis, false or true. Malice catches it, turns it, rolls it in the dust, adds to it, and makes of it an overwhelming ruin.

One little dark spot upon a man's character thus has been widened into it has encompassed all his hopes, all his expectations, blasted his life, and who may tell but the subtle influence reaching still further may have sullied his chances for eternity.

Hate, honestly expressed, is seldom injurious. All it asks is to be relieved from disagreeable proximity with its object, or, if hostile contact comes, gives the warning which permits defense.

It is poor economy of the farmer to hire men summer after summer, when their wages would pay for a machine, which would do their work as well, quicker, and with less amount of money in the end.

If you hear of persons complaining that they are no better off at the end of the year for all their economy, you may, as a general thing, conclude that the economy they have been practising is not the true but the false kind.

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If you hear of persons complaining that they are no better off at the end of the year for all their economy, you may, as a general thing, conclude that the economy they have been practising is not the true but the false kind.

Rumor starts a whisper from some basis, false or true. Malice catches it, turns it, rolls it in the dust, adds to it, and makes of it an overwhelming ruin.

One little dark spot upon a man's character thus has been widened into it has encompassed all his hopes, all his expectations, blasted his life, and who may tell but the subtle influence reaching still further may have sullied his chances for eternity.

Hate, honestly expressed, is seldom injurious.

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One little dark spot upon a

WHEN I AM DEAD.

BY EBEN E. HENFORD.

When I am covered with the grass,
I'll long remember the place to pass,
Or leave me moments, one to pray,
And in that surely-coming day
Say, as you smell the pinpernel,
Here lieth one who loved me well.

You do not care for me, I know;
For pride you could not stoop so low;
One from your high and proud estate
With lowly lover could not mate.
But ah! when I am dead, I know
You'll think of him who loved you so.

And oh! I shall not be forgot!
You'll miss me, though you love me not.
I'll leave you, when I come to pass,
That though it came to you from me,
You'll think of it, and thrill to know
That one has lived who loved you so!

And when you pass my grave, and see
The blossoms blowing for the bee,
And hear the south winds saying mass
Like wandering fairies, who chance to pass
O'er the green, the purple, the rose,
Oh, think of him who loved you well!

WILMA WILDE,
The Doctor's Ward:
THE INHERITANCE OF HATE.BY MRS. JENNIE DAVIS BURTON,
AUTHOR OF "CORAL AND RUBY," "ADRIA, THE ADOPTED,"
"THE GRETIE WIFE," "STRANGELY WED," "CECIL'S
DECEIT," "MADAME DURAND'S PROPHETIES,"
"THE FALE WIDOW," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FOR THREE DAYS.

CRAYTON, tipped back in one of the leather-covered office-chairs, his heels in complicit familiarity with the banker's desk, was listening to the story of Wilma's disappearance, interspersed as it was by the banker's ejaculations of regret and annoyance, by no means grown less after three hours down town.

"Most inexplicable occurrence to my mind and very distressing to all of us," he said, passing his hand over his smooth face and rubbing his soft white palms together, with the aimless motion of mental dissatisfaction. So much prosperity and so little disappointment in all the enterprises of all his smooth, well-regulated life left Howard Richland at a loss in meeting even this departure from the usual way. However Mr. Richland might endure greater trials should they come to him, he was perplexed and disturbed to a degree over this.

Crayton had looked in at the bank with the sang froid belonging to his class, the assurance which recognizes no inner scroll of any man's life sacred from intrusion. He greeted the banker with a careless nod and a good-morning.

"I haven't any one to interview," he said, "no terrible disaster to chronicle, and have left the commonplaces to the lesser lights of our ilk. How did you leave the ladies this morning, Mr. Richland. Let me hope Mrs. Richland's indisposition had no later continuance."

"It was but a passing faintness and did not recur," answered Mr. Richland, with his usual precision. "I left them both quite well though very much distressed. You are the very man I want to see, Crayton. Come in here and have a seat for a moment."

Crayton went in, nothing loth, to the inner office with its comfortable appointments, its walls frescoed, its woodwork carved, its furniture solid, heavy and plain, very careless over the mark of distinction this attaint from the banker appeared.

"Mrs. Richland suggested consulting you," the banker went on, after making his first explanation, "and I remembered that you knew something of the person who is Wilma's guardian. For my part I am quite bewildered. They will ascertain at the house if Wilma has returned, and upon my word! I don't know what more you might do unless to suggest the best means of following her up without making the affair a matter of public comment."

"Count on me proving good as an amateur detective," said the reporter, confidently. "A man who is in all sorts of places every day, and has had experience with all sorts of people, has a better chance of stumbling over mysteries than others who might set to work in a more methodical way. 'Pon honor, much as I appreciate the compliment conferred, I must declare that Mrs. Richland is a lady of decided penetration."

The two were sitting in consultation still when Lenoir was ushered in. Crayton catching a doubtful glance in his direction answered with his unusual unconcern.

"Don't mind me," he said, lounging across to a window which overlooked the street, as apparently indifferent to the world without as to the two men within. Lenoir took him at his word. People in general had a habit of not minding Crayton so long as his duties did not lead him to interfere with them. Besides it was not Lenoir's mission to betray any of the confidence Captain Bernham had placed in him.

"I have come on private business," he said, regarding Miss Wilde."

"Regarding Wilma! Have you heard of her, Mr. Lenoir?—what?"

"I am authorized with a message from Miss Wilde's father, Mr. Richland. An acquaintance I have recently made, Captain Leigh Bernham, who is stopping at the St. Clair now, is prepared to authenticate his claim in that capacity. He will give the best of references for your satisfaction and assurance of his responsibility. At his request I undertook to transmit his wishes, to inform you of his right, and to avoid, if possible, the tedious formalities of any legal process."

"Wilma's father! Upon my word, this is growing to be a complex affair. My dear fellow, are you sure there is no mistake about it? I certainly understand that Wilma was an orphan, without relatives of any degree."

It only needed this latest phase to disturb Mr. Richland's serenity to its greatest depths.

"It was the general supposition, I believe. Some early misunderstanding effected a separation between Captain Bernham and his young wife; he was called away to duty upon the frontier, and received news a few months later of her death. Captain Bernham had unconsciously gained the enmity of his wife's father; their marriage had been a secret one, and he was never apprised of his daughter's existence.

"Accident and the testimony of an old servant recently revealed the truth to him. If any difficulty is put in the way of his claiming his daughter he is prepared to put the matter in the hands of a lawyer, but I trust there may be no difficulty when he presents his claim in proper form. He has heard of your extreme kindness to her, and believed it best to advise you in some such way as this, at the same time to spare Wilma the suddenness of the shock an abrupt statement might give her."

"But there is a difficulty," Mr. Richland asserted. "There, Lenoir, don't look as though you supposed we would throw an obstacle in the way of the child's good. She came to us almost under protest from her guardian. Crayton here can tell you more of him; I know him by name, merely, this Dr. Dallas, who is

her responsible protector. I had hoped to succeed him if any change could be effected in regard to Wilma, but your strange story puts an end to that expectation, I suppose."

"You think the difficulty apprehended will be in opposition from Dr. Dallas?"

"I know nothing whatever of that person, let me repeat. The difficulty lies in the fact that Wilma has deserted us, gone off in the most incomprehensible and inconsiderate manner. I am quite used-up between the surprise, first from her action, and now the later one of her revelation of yours?"

And there the story of Wilma's disappearance was repeated again, and discussed with even more dissatisfaction on the banker's part than before. With no newer conjecture of what motive must have prompted her came the knowledge which promised additional disappointment for themselves, whatever it might portend favorably for Wilma. Mr. Richland would not selfishly have consigned Captain Leigh Bernham and his claim to oblivion if he readily could, but there was actual regret to his thought that Wilma was lost to the place in his home and heart which the lack of any child of his own had left unfilled.

Crayton, failing a little in his self-absorption, and finding nothing worthy of his attention in the familiar sights of the street, lounged back to his place by the banker's desk. He had picked up a pen and was scrawling idly over a sheet of blank paper lying there.

"I haven't an idea of how my wife and Ethel will take this added surprise," said Mr. Richland, as the young journalist rose. "Can't you spare time to come back with me, Lenoir? I am going back to the house directly. You, too, Crayton. What a relief it would prove on the top of all this perplexity to find Wilma is really gone back to her guardian. Why is she?"

He had gone across to Crayton's back, and stood staring down at the scribbled sheet, torn in strips now and strewn over the desk; Crayton, pen in hand, scrawled over another line, Mr. Richland's amazed eyes following him.

"Upon my word, I never would have believed it if I had not seen for myself. It's the very fac-simile of Gertrude's hand, the very shade and turn she gives her letters. Inappropriate as such, an occurrence might be at any time, and impossible as it would have been at this particular time since I haven't been away from the place, it really struck me first that Gertrude must have been here and left a written message. Strange how very like. What is it you have written?"

"I, Rose, take thee, Robert?"

"No matter, of course. You must be acquainted with my wife's chirography to imitate it so perfectly."

"Never had the pleasure of seeing it that I am aware of, but I have rather a facility for running different styles. As for ladies' writing that always runs in the same groove, sloping and Italian, all hair lines and shades at the curves, a very little modification will suit the hand to any of the sex."

"Perhaps," Mr. Richland admitted, doubtfully. Crayton had deftly twirled the fragments of paper together, rolled them between his palms, and tossed the ball so made into the waste-basket. "You are both coming?"

"Sorry, but I have an engagement too near at hand. Lenoir here can bring back any news there may be to me."

Lenoir, approached near enough to overlook the little scene, darted a quick glance at the reporter's sallow, undemonstrative face. His keen eyes had read the fragment—"I, Rose, take thee, Raymond"—and he had instantly connected the names with the story he had so recently heard. What could Crayton know of it? Crayton's expression did not betray, and Lenoir very soon dismissed the speculation.

The reporter sauntered away in his solitary direction, and the other walked briskly through the streets back to the Western avenue mansion. No lessening of anxiety had occurred there during Mr. Richland's absence. Ethel had just returned from her drive in a nervous flutter until a sured that no tidings of Wilma had come. Dr. Dallas had been there and gone, so the hope they had all encouraged that she might have voluntarily returned to his care was ended.

That scene in the library had not gone beyond its four walls. Mrs. Richland had silently fainted in her chair, and Dr. Dallas, with his own unwearying patience, had waited the natural course of restoration. A little apprehension mingled with his waiting before it was quite over. His eye fell on a cut-glass flagon upon the mantel filled with some fragrant essence, and he took it down sprinkling the unconscious face liberally from its contents. Then as he observed signs of returning consciousness he retreated to a window and half withdrew behind the falling drapery. This was through no consideration on the part of the man; it was simply the policy of supreme selfishness.

"Give her a moment to come thoroughly back to herself, to fully comprehend the force of the declaration I made, and there will be no useless scene, no hysteria or other excess of nervous agitation. Truly a woman with her amount of nerve should be a mark for the sex; I positively thought for a second that she was not going to give a sign. There's always a ten-der spot with even the sternest and coldest of them, however, and I flatter myself that I have found our self-sufficient Madame Richland's vulnerable point."

He turned presently to meet the steady, dark eyes silently watching him.

"Oh, recovered," he said, advancing from his position within the shadow of the curtain. "And no bad effects from your late shock, let me hope. I see; not even occasion for me to prescribe. Believe me, I would willingly be of service in that way, if at all necessary. Permit me to felicitate you upon your wonderful powers of self-command, Mrs. Richland; but I recall you were noted for that rare virtue when you were not Mrs. Richland."

There was a smoldering fire in those steady eyes now, a burning redness in the closed lips in vivid contrast with the still whiteness of the perfect face—a warning of surging, hidden passion-flares had Dr. Dallas rightly interpreted them. She neither noticed these later words of his, nor made any reference to the weakness which had overtaken her.

"If that is the truth," she said, "why are you telling it to me now? Why are you not still keeping the secret which you have kept so well for seventeen years?"

"Perhaps that very lapse of time may have released me from the obligation of keeping it secret; in fact, I may as well say that it is so. You were the smallest concern in my share of that out-of-the-way bit of by-play of seventeen years ago. My patron of the occasion paid me liberally according to his means for the service rendered. He had his own reasons for wishing the child dead; I had discovered his hatred of it before it was ushered into existence; but with too much conscience to permit the small life to drift out before it was fairly begun through any gross neglect. It must be dead to you, that was his edict, I was bound to obey his instructions, of course, and I don't pretend to any particular qualms in doing so. I was discreet in those days, and let us hope not quite a fool. I did my bidding in the simplest way, and found means to discover all I then cared to

know. I discovered what relation existed between my patron saint and my patient, what distorted and over-strained views of his, along with some personal disappointment which I put down to quite a wrong basis then, influenced the strong feeling which he expressed and from which he acted. I traced up the child and kept the remembrance of his anxiety before me, letting you drop out of sight as a doomed character whose part in the play was well over. It was left me to understand that the dead life which disturbed my patron saint's mind at a later date was to be yours from that time forth. I have not even attempted to reconcile that departure from his plans as I understood them. You were to enter some institution of sequestered sisterhood and be dead to the world. Whether that was so much difficulty on his part, or if he was overruled by your will afterward, I wouldn't pretend to say now. I retained my knowledge, and my very good friend was happy to remember my service of that time at various intervals in a substantial way during the seventeen years since—remembered it handsomely as his circumstances would permit upon his death-bed. And only then I suspected for the first how much a wider sphere of gratitude should have attained in the upper stratum. No more duty was owing to my patron saint, so, manifestly, my duty to myself is that to be developed next."

"You mean," interrupted Mrs. Richland's quiet voice, "that after extorting bribes to insure your silence from him, all his life, he is no sooner dead than you betray the last confidence he reposed in you. You think to have gained a hold upon me which shall answer the same as the power you have held over him."

"Ah, but there you mistake," answered Dr. Dallas, with a faintly deprecating gesture. "I have a taste for mysteries—almost any one of my regular patients can tell you so, and a faculty which possibly may run into a species of harmless mania for following up the same. Let us call it that, and say I have a mania for mastering mysteries of this sort. Then there are family prides and family honors which might be so nearly affected by the same; fancy the gratification of such responsibility as having family pride and family honor hanging upon a word withheld or spoken by me. There is something irresistibly charming, inexpressibly delightful in the thought."

"That tells me nothing of what you want or expect of me. Don't boast or attempt indisputable triumph before you have gained grounds for the same; it is in exceedingly bad taste."

"And Mrs. Richland is an oracle from whom there is no appeal. 'Man wants but little here below,' my dear madame, and my want is most moderate. I want Wilma Wilde specifically found, and when found, I want that you shall urge no interference with my own claim which I may bring forward."

"And then you would betray all you know or fancy you know, to my husband?"

"My dear madame, betray! It is the second time you have used the word to reflect to my disadvantage. It is the code of the profession never to betray. With such family pride and family honor as I have already made reference to hanging in the balance—"

"You possibly might find yourself forestalled in any disclosure you had to make. You have shown me what I may expect from you, Dr. Dallas. Take the assurance that I am quite capable of that much in return."

The flame had made a leap into the hitherto colorless cheeks. Even Dr. Dallas, phlegmatic, designing, experienced a feeling akin to admiration at sight of the face answering so aptly to a strong resolution, and in the second required the unwanted impulse to turn cold again, he found himself left the solitary occupant of the room, Mrs. Richland's clear, bell-like, vibrating tone without ringing distinctly in his hearing.

"You will find Dr. Dallas in the library, William, waiting to be shown out. Attend to your duty at once."

"True grit, and not a waver, I believe, by my soul!" the doctor muttered to himself, between set teeth, with a smile which was no favorable index upon his face. "It is well to have a host in reserve, my high-handed madame. Forestall me if you like; enthrall me to your heart's content; trust in winning forgiveness for the simple deception resulting from girlish folly as you will doubtless put it; call up the pathetic story of the early unhappy marriage; gain all the sympathy and avert all the blame, and then be overwhelmed by the evidence I can bring to bear. I owe you that much full for your scornful treatment of me."

There is never pity in a heart like his; never mercy in a narrow, sordid soul. He would have had no feeling but of exultation had he been a witness to the moment of utter prostration which succeeded, robbing her of all that brave assured bearing, bowing her pallid, and with every nerve relaxed with the swift thrust of agitation rushing over her.

"Mine—my very own—Wilma mine!" were the words her softened lips whispered to herself, breathlessly, over and over again. "Mine, and I never to know it, not to suspect it when my heart yearned over her to the strain of when I was there with you first that I have never gone back."

She was invisible still when Mrs. Latham's carriage, rolling past the door, deposit Ethel, but ten minutes later, when her husband returned with Lenoir in his company, her quiet, contained presence was the first to meet them.

If it was less quiet, or less contained, as Lenoir's mission was unavailed, not one there had any perception of it.

"Gertrude's presence always does me good," her husband had said once, in confidence to a friend. "She is calm, with a reliance which an earthquake would not shock. I don't believe in men who require a prop, but I'm proud to declare that my wife is as pure stuff as ever shone in a Spartan mother."

That stuff, had Mr. Richland only been aware, shone at his brightest in the half-hour after his return. Wilma claimed by a strange father who had not suspected her existence until less than a fortnight past; Wilma, for whom the father-love and the mother-love had sprung up, and been recognized so very recently—Wilma gone from both; the two separated by a chaffing, droll-inspiring barrier that never in time could they be mutually drawn within it.

There could be but one aim now as conceded by general acclamation—though had they observed, Mrs. Richland was mute there—Wilma must be found, no method must be left untried, and Lenoir carried with him authority to insert a carefully worded advertisement in each of the leading dailies.

Later, Erle Hetherill came in with set white face and blue eyes stormily ablaze—came in on his fair fiancee as it chanced, quite alone.

"What does it mean?" he broke out, with perfect abruptness. "What truth is there in this Crayton has been telling me, that Wilma is gone without provocation and without warning? What has driven that inexperienced child into such a step?"

Ethel wondered at his vehemence, looking up into his stern face.

"We are all very much distressed, Erle. It is true that Wilma has gone, leaving no reason and no trace. She said in the note she left

that it was her duty to go, and that she would appeal to a friend. We are all at the greatest loss without one trace of a clue to show us in which direction to turn with a hope of finding her."

"She must be found, she shall be!" declared Erle, in the same strangely vehement way.

But the days wore themselves out, and Wilma's friends were worn along with them through anxiety for her; but neither Erle's declaration, which was followed by his earnest action, nor Captain Leigh Bernham's widely伸展ed search, nor Mr. Richland's perplexed following of their two examples, resulted in any return or hint of success. Crayton had faded out of the field almost before the others engaged in it—faded as well from the familiar places which had known him daily before, but which now knew him not.

Thus for three days.

CHAPTER XXIV.
A STRICKEN VILLAGE.

THREE busy, anxious days they had been, up in the little Westmoreland village. Malignant typhoid was sweeping its way with an irresistible force, and had stricken a third of the population in this short time. Scarcely a family where one or more members had not succumbed to the disease. One of the Biffin children had died, and on the morning of the third day the still little form lay in its plain casket. Before night another one had passed out of life, and the same grave would receive them both.

There were indefatigable workers in the midst of the suffering, frightened people. Dr. Joy, kindly and gruff, and inveighing against the wilful disregard of all sanitary measures, until the shock of a calamity like this fell upon them, counting disease by their habits of living, their overcrowded, ill-ventilated houses, was doing his best to mitigate the affliction. His own regular round of patients, together with this added strain, had kept him at his best effort for three days and nights, but the doctor was one of those prickly human burrs that will bristle all over and resent as an injury any recognition of his own warm-heartedness, or persistent sacrifice of his own comfort.

"If I care to waste any time in blowing up these foolehardy villagers," Dr. Joy would say, "and punish them with physics and drugs they ought never to need in this healthy atmosphere, it's their look-out, not

"Who ever heard of a concentrated shadow?" questioned Paul Engle, scowling such an idea.

"Why, boy, if ye only knowed any thing you'd know that are such shadars. I've seed 'em standin' stock-still afore now in a dark, wooded valley; but the instant the sun or moon skiped out from behind a cloud, aw'ay'd go the shadars like a big giant."

"I can't indorse your philosophical explanation of what we have seen, Mr. Eller, although such a thing may be possible. But suppose we drop the subject and look after the object that brought us here, for time is precious, you know."

"Sartainly, sartainly, captain," replied old Jack; "let us be movin', come weal or woe!"

They at once resumed their journey, moving slow and cautiously; but they had journeyed but a short way when they were again brought to a stand, this time by a sound like that which would be produced by some dying, strangling creature gasping for breath.

"What the mysteries can it be, anyhow?" asked old Jack Eller.

"It appears to be something or some one gasping for breath," replied St. John.

They listened and at once became convinced that the captain was right, though it might have been produced by an enemy trying to decoy them into an ambush. St. John, however, impatient to test the matter, drew his pistol and moved silently but briskly toward the sound. He soon issued into an open area, or glade, where the starlight reached the earth, unobstructed by foliage; and there, in the center of the opening, he saw an Indian warrior, reclining against a stone, his hands lying limp and helpless at his side and his chin drooping upon his naked breast. He was in the last throes of death, being totally unconscious and with his eyes closed.

"Bruders not all there. Lots in Michigan woods. Me here to talk with 'One Arm,' replied the Indian, in a tone and language that convinced all present that he was not a genuine Indian, but a white man in disguise. But, with feigned ignorance of the fact, the Giant Scout replied:

"Come in then, and let me hear what you have to say."

The Indian advanced into the house, and, at a signal from the scout, his comrades fell back and seated themselves on the opposite side of the room. The Indian and One-Armed Alf remained standing.

"I am ready now to hear what the Ojibway chief has to say to me," the scout said.

"Does 'One Arm' and his pale-face friends know there is war between our people?"

"We have heard it intimated, but have no positive proof of the fact; and sincerely hope that it is not so."

"It is so," replied the Indian, glancing from the other of his auditors to see the effect his words would have upon them, "and hundreds of Yankees scalps hang at Indian girdles."

"Do you know this to be a fact, Ojibway?"

"I do. Already great battles have been fought."

"Where al?"

"One at Mackinaw."

"And what was the result of the fight at Mackinaw?"

"Mackinaw was captured."

"Great Heaven! can this be possible?" cried Captain St. John, starting up.

A grim smile of satisfaction and triumph passed over the face of the Indian as he replied:

"The young warrior is surprised at the news—so are his companions; but Long Run tells the truth; Mackinaw has fallen."

"Oh, God! let me out of this—let me go!" cried St. John, starting wildly toward the door.

"Hold a moment, young man," said One-Armed Alf, laying his hand on the young captain's shoulders; "wait, and we will go with you. The time has come when cool, calm consideration beforehand will be our only safeguard."

"It is hard—hard to do, Alf, when the lives of those we hold dear may hang upon the action of a moment," said the captain, resuming his seat.

Then One-Armed Alf turned to the Ojibway and continued:

"Let us hear what else Long Run has to communicate."

"I have but little more to say, for 'One Arm's' mind is long and he can guess the rest. He knows that the great lakes were once the undisputed range of the red-man. But the pale-faces came in and drove him away and built up forts and villages; cut down our trees, and killed our game and our brothers. Now the red-man has dug up the hatchet. The pale-faces must all die, or flee from the hunting-grounds of the Indian. 'One Arm' can not shoot, neither can he wield a tomahawk; but his skin is white, and his heart is too, and his scalp would count one in the eyes of the great Canada Father. The red-men would not take the scalp of one whom the Great Spirit made without an arm, as an example of his wrath and punishment upon all white men who raise their hands against the red-skin; but when the Indian hatchet, wet with pale-face blood, is raised, he spares none."

"I observe, Ojibway," said One-Armed Alf, leaning slightly upon his long, knotted cane, "that you have some secret motive in coming here—something besides your avowed friendship and kindness. In the first place I observe you are not an Indian, but a white man disguised, which misrepresentation leads me to mistrust you of some treachery."

"Thanks, brother Alf. You came in time, for I must admit that I had my hands full—the knave was an exception to any thing I ever had a hold of, in point of strength."

"By Judas!" exclaimed old Jack Eller, no longer enabled to restrain his emotions; "it's One-Armed Alf and Darcy Mayfield! Howdy, Alf! Why, Darcy, you young rascal, what for did you give us the slip the way you did? Glad to meet you, Alf; this is Cap'n St. John, from Mackinaw; glad to find you with your hair on, Alf—got your message and hustled off up here like sixty. What's on the rampage by this time?"

"The woods are full of the heathen fo," replied the Giant Scout, in a low tone; "bloody times may now be expected. The spirit of evil and the Indians go hand in hand, and, too, the spirit of the Wilderness is abroad."

"Ay, ay, friend Alfred," returned Eller, "you speak the truth. We seed an Ojibway that the Spirit had slashed it to, not an arrow ago. But how comes it that you're in trouble?"

"I know not unless the varlets mistrust that I am a friend to the whites."

"But you don't go cuttin' and slashin' and shootin' around like Mayfield here, so, why should they trouble you?"

"They know my inability to handle fire-arms successfully," replied the scout, "but they begin to mistrust something of the real truth—that I am a scout and spy in the employ of the United States. But I care nothing for this; those lives at Mackinaw are what interest me now, for they're in imminent danger."

"Well, stranger," said St. John, addressing the scout, "we are now on our way to Mackinaw."

"But you have gone out of your course by coming this way."

"We came this way on purpose to help you out of your danger first."

"I am greatly obliged to you, friends, for your kind regards for me, but do not tarry here, I pray. If you go with me to my cabin, I will lock up and go with you to Mackinaw."

"That's the talk, friend Alf," said old Jack;

"your assistance as a scout will be worth a dozen good men."

"Then follow me," replied the scout, and turning, he moved away into the woods. His faithful hound took the lead, while Eller and his party followed close behind the scout.

A few minutes' walk brought them to the door of the scout's cabin. All was darkness and silence within. One-Armed Alf gave the surrounding glade a hasty glance, then opened the door and entered the building, followed by his companions.

A light was soon struck, and as its rays dispelled the lurking shadows from the apartment, the scout glanced about the room as if looking for some one or something.

"Somethin' missin', Alf?" asked the inquisitive old Jack Eller.

"Yes; Ethiope, my black companion and housekeeper, is gone, and it seems a little

strange that he should be away at this time. I hope he's not got into trouble."

"Ay, ay, you mean that black nigger? I remember him now," replied Eller.

"I can see no signs of violence about the place," said Darcy Mayfield.

"Harkie! There's a footstep at the door; it may be your nig?"

Every eye was at once bent upon the door, when the sound of the scout was seen to leap into the room with apparent fright.

"What is it Sultan—what is it?"

The dog uttered a low, plaintive whine and advancing to the door again, he elevated his nose, sniffed the air with apparent doubt, then bounded back to his master's side again.

"I can't indorse your philosophical explanation of what we have seen, Mr. Eller, although such a thing may be possible. But suppose we drop the subject and look after the object that brought us here, for time is precious, you know."

"Sartainly, sartainly, captain," replied old Jack; "let us be movin', come weal or woe!"

They at once resumed their journey, moving slow and cautiously; but they had journeyed but a short way when they were again brought to a stand, this time by a sound like that which would be produced by some dying, strangling creature gasping for breath.

"What the mysteries can it be, anyhow?" asked old Jack Eller.

"It appears to be something or some one gasping for breath," replied St. John.

They listened and at once became convinced that the captain was right, though it might have been produced by an enemy trying to decoy them into an ambush. St. John, however, impatient to test the matter, drew his pistol and moved silently but briskly toward the sound.

He soon issued into an open area, or glade, where the starlight reached the earth, unobstructed by foliage; and there, in the center of the opening, he saw an Indian warrior, reclining against a stone, his hands lying limp and helpless at his side and his chin drooping upon his naked breast. He was in the last throes of death, being totally unconscious and with his eyes closed.

"Bruders not all there. Lots in Michigan woods. Me here to talk with 'One Arm,'" replied the Indian, in a tone and language that convinced all present that he was not a genuine Indian, but a white man in disguise.

"No; but your great Father at Washington has declared war against our Canada Father, and we know you'll take sides with your people."

"Suppose, then, we agree to leave here, what assurance have we that you will not follow and shoot us when our backs are turned?"

"Then One Arm does not believe an Ojibway can tell the truth?" said Long Run.

"Yes; an Ojibway might, but a renegade like you is not to be believed."

A grim, satanic smile flitted across the face of Long Run, and his eyes flashed a deadly, revengeful look upon the undaunted scout.

A momentary silence followed the scout's return; then the renegade said:

"It is no use for us to spend further words, One Arm. We are here for two things. One, to exact a promise that you will leave this country; another, for one person in your party."

As he spoke, the chief rose slowly to his party.

"Which one of our party do you want?" asked the scout.

"That one," the renegade replied, pointing to Darcy Mayfield.

"What do you want him for—to eat?" asked old Jack, in a tone of provoking sarcasm.

"That's none of the old gray-beard's business," replied Long Run; "we want that man alive, so we can git him so, but if not, we will take him dead."

There was an involuntary commotion among the Indians, and each eye sought the face of Darcy Mayfield, who stood unmoved by the demands of the renegade chief. He did, however, exchange glances with the Giant Scout; then both fixed a close, studying gaze upon Long Run's face, as if trying to penetrate his disguise of pain and feathers. While thus engaged, old Jack Eller broke forth:

"I say, Long Run, you're a darned on'y knave, and if you want to stand erect here without a punctuated hide, you mus' talk more respectful to me, Jackson Eller; or I'll be cussed if I don't swamp ye, tooth and nail. My blood's beginnin' to bile, and the heart's blood of a hundred Ingins won't satisfy me when I git set to goin' on't, now mind, ye rumpin' niggers you."

Long Run pretended not to have heard the old borderman's words, but fixing his eyes upon the scout, asked:

"What does the scout of the pale-faces say?"

"What will he give up the young man, or will he not?"

"Long Run, do you take us for a pack of cowards? Do you suppose we will surrender one of our men to you?" Never!"

"You must, or take the consequences."

"We'll take the consequences."

Long Run turned to his warriors, who had all the while maintained a stoical silence, and addressed a few words to them in the Ojibway tongue. Every warrior arose to his feet.

"It is hard—hard to do, Alf, when the lives of those we hold dear may hang upon the action of a moment," said the captain, resuming his seat.

Then One-Armed Alf turned to the Ojibway and continued:

"Let us hear what else Long Run has to communicate."

"I have but little more to say, for 'One Arm's' mind is long and he can guess the rest. He knows that the great lakes were once the undisputed range of the red-man. But the pale-faces came in and drove him away and built up forts and villages; cut down our trees, and killed our game and our brothers. Now the red-man has dug up the hatchet. The pale-faces must all die, or flee from the hunting-grounds of the Indian. 'One Arm' can not shoot, neither can he wield a tomahawk; but his skin is white, and his heart is too, and his scalp would count one in the eyes of the great Canada Father. The red-men would not take the scalp of one whom the Great Spirit made without an arm, as an example of his wrath and punishment upon all white men who raise their hands against the red-skin; but when the Indian hatchet, wet with pale-face blood, is raised, he spares none."

"I observe, Ojibway," said One-Armed Alf, leaning slightly upon his long, knotted cane, "that you have some secret motive in coming here—something besides your avowed friendship and kindness. In the first place I observe you are not an Indian, but a white man disguised, which misrepresentation leads me to mistrust you of some treachery."

"Thanks, brother Alf. You came in time, for I must admit that I had my hands full—the knave was an exception to any thing I ever had a hold of, in point of strength."

"By Judas!" exclaimed old Jack Eller, no longer enabled to restrain his emotions; "it's One-Armed Alf and Darcy Mayfield! Howdy, Alf! Why, Darcy, you young rascal, what for did you give us the slip the way you did? Glad to meet you, Alf; this is Cap'n St. John, from Mackinaw; glad to find you with your hair on, Alf—got your message and hustled off up here like sixty. What's on the rampage by this time?"

"The woods are full of the heathen fo," replied the Giant Scout, in a low tone; "bloody times may now be expected. The spirit of evil and the Indians go hand in hand, and, too, the spirit of the Wilderness is abroad."

"Ay, ay, friend Alfred," returned Eller, "you speak the truth. We seed an Ojibway that the Spirit had slashed it to, not an arrow ago.

"But how comes it that you're in trouble?"

"I know not unless the varlets mistrust that I am a friend to the whites."

"But you don't go cuttin' and slashin' and shootin' around like Mayfield here, so, why should they trouble you?"

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THE SATURDAY STAR JOURNAL

7

word to swerve you from the path of duty. I am too old a soldier to counsel you to do wrong," said the old man, quickly.

"Besides, General, I think about the best blow that we can strike for your daughter's rescue is to whip the red heathens that are coming ag'in us. When we drive 'em back, then we can follow them up, and perhaps be able to snake the little gal out of their hands." Boone was trying by his words to lift the weight of sorrow that pressed so heavily upon the heart of the old soldier.

The father shook his head, sorrowfully. He had little hope of ever seeing his daughter again.

He knew the nature of the red-men well. If defeated in their attack on the station, they would be apt in their rage to avenge their defeat by giving any helpless prisoner that might be in their hands to the fiery torture of death at the stake. No wonder that the father's heart was sad.

"How many men have come in, Jake?" questioned Boone.

"We've got nigh onto two hundred, all told," replied the sturdy Indian-fighter.

"Well we ought to be able to whip a thousand of the red-skins easy," said Boone, in confident tone. "Do you expect any more, Jake?"

"Not above half a dozen, I tellest; we've drawn 'bout all our men in now," Jackson replied.

"Set the women to running bullets, and get plenty of water inside the stockade. The red heathens may make a sieve of it," said Boone.

"Everything has been fixed, kurnel."

"That's pert. Now, Jake, I guess we three had better take a little rest. We've been everlastingly tramping through the timber. Throw out some scouts up the river to watch for the red devils. After I've had an hour's nap I'll take to the woods myself."

Then Boone went to his cabin; he was followed by Kenton and Lark.

"I wonder what's the matter with the stranger; did you notice how pale he looked?" said Boone, referring to Lark.

"Wal—yes, I did," replied one of the settlers, who stood by Jackson's side. "I reckon we've had a putty tough tramp onto it. Maybe, though, some on us will look white afore we git through with Ke-ne-ha-ha and his Shawnees."

Many an anxious face in the little group of men that surrounded Jackson testified to the truth of the speaker's guess.

In the cabin the three scouts stretched themselves upon the bear-skins spread upon the floor, and soon were in the land of dreams.

The hour's nap of Boone had lasted some four hours, and the shades of evening were beginning to gather thick about the settlement when the old borderer awoke.

Boone rubbed his eyes and indulged in a prolonged yawn.

"Jerusalem! my eyes feel as if they were full of sticks," he muttered.

Then Boone cast his eyes through the little window that lit up the cabin, to the sky.

"It's late, too, by hookey!" he cried. "It's time for us to be on the look-out, for the red devils will probably try to cross the Ohio some time after dark."

Then Boone laid his hand upon Kenton's shoulder.

The scout awoke instantly. His slumber was like the sleep of a cat.

"Time for our scout, Kenton," Boone said.

"All right, I'm on hand, kurnel. Shall I wake Lark?" Kenton asked.

The third one of the scouts was still buried in heavy slumbers.

"Yes, he'll be mad if we go without him, or at least, I know I would be," said Boone, with a chuckle. The stout-hearted borderer welcomed danger as he would an early friend.

"All right; I'll wake him, then."

Kenton laid his hand upon Lark's shoulder, but the sleeper stirred not.

"Shake him a little," suggested Boone.

Kenton did so, but the sleeping man never stirred.

"He's laying himself right down to it, ain't he?" said Boone, with a dry humor in his voice.

"Hadn't we better go without him?" asked Kenton.

"Try once more. He's the soundest sleeper that I ever did see," Boone said.

Again Kenton shook the sleeping man, and this time violently, but the effort was useless; Lark never moved.

Kenton bent over and examined him.

"He ain't a-breathein' right," the scout said, in some little alarm.

"Has he got another fit?" asked Boone, quickly.

"Well, it looks like it. His teeth are clenched together, and he's breathing like a quarter-horse."

Boone knelt by Kenton's side and bent over him.

A moment's examination convinced Boone that there was something the matter with his companion.

Lark's breath came thick and hard.

"Another spell, by thunder!" muttered Boone, as with Kenton, he bent over the unconscious man.

Then, suddenly, as though moved by some secret spring, Lark's eyes opened. He stared into the faces of the two that bent over him, but his eyes were like eyes of glass; there was no life therein.

Like men in a trance, Boone and Kenton gazed into the white face and the great, staring eyes.

There was something in the face that seemed to chill the very blood coursing in their veins.

For a moment Lark stared with meaningless eyes at the two, and they fixed as staves, horrified, they knew not at what, returned the look of fury upon his hands of death.

With a sudden start, and apparently with the strength of a giant playing in his muscles, Lark sprung to his feet.

As he rose, he came in violent contact with Boone and Kenton, and the sudden shock hurried them to the floor as though they had been two children.

When he had gained his feet, Lark cast a rapid glance around him, passed his hand mechanically across his forehead, and then, with a stealthy step, like unto a wild beast crawling in upon its prey, he left the cabin.

For a moment Boone and Kenton, seated upon the floor where they had fallen, looked at each other in speechless astonishment.

"If he ain't mad, I'm a catfish!" cried Kenton.

"Let's feller him; he may do some one a mischief!" exclaimed Boone. Then, with eager haste, they followed Lark.

CHAPTER XXXV.

THE PRICE OF LE-A-PAH'S HAND.

The shades of night descended upon the village of Cliffoche, yet the plumed and painted warriors hid by Ke-ne-ha-ha were not forth upon their expedition against the whites on the banks of the Ohio.

The red chieftain fumed and chafed like a caged lion. His allies, the Wyandots and the Mingoes, had sent word that they could not move their forces for three days, and so, despite

his desire for war, he was compelled to remain inactive.

The wily sachem knew full well that he could accomplish nothing unless he came down upon his foes in overwhelming numbers.

Ke-ne-ha-ha had faced the deadly fire of the white rifles on many a bloody field. He had felt the prowess of the hardy borderers, and had learned to respect it. No hot-headed boy was he, to rashly dare the power of the white-skinned without a force far superior to their own.

And so he waited, and while he waited—furious as the angry bear cheated of his prey—he called down the curses of the Great Spirit upon the heads of the slow-moving chiefs, his allies.

He paced restlessly up and down the narrow confines of his wigwam.

The chiefs of the Wyandots and the Mingoes are like turtles; they should have houses on their backs. A warrior should be like the eagle or the hawk—swift as the forked light of the Great Spirit. The white-skinned must know that the red-men will soon take the war-path against them. The great chief, Boone, has long ears. Like a fox he crept into the Shawnee village; he will carry back to his people the news that the red warriors are arming for the fight."

The meditations of the chief were interrupted by the entrance of his daughter, Le-a-pah.

The features of the chieftain softened as he looked upon the handsome face of his only child.

"May Le-a-pah speak with her father, the great chief?" asked the girl, with a timid smile.

"The heart of the father is always open to the words of his child," replied the chief, drawing the little form of the girl to him as he spoke, and smoothing back the dark masses of ebony hair from her low forehead.

"Will my father be angry if Le-a-pah speaks straight?" and the girl looked shyly into her father's face as she spoke.

"Let my daughter speak; the chief will not be angry at his singing-bird, because her tongue is not forked," said Ke-ne-ha-ha, tenderly.

"My father is the great chief of the Shawnee nation; will my father be angry if his child has looked upon a young brave with loving eyes?"

An earnest look the chief cast into his daughter's face.

"The singing-bird wishes to leave her father, then?"

"Did not the mother of the singing-bird leave her father when she came to sing in the lodge of the great chief?" the maiden asked, with a smile.

"My daughter speaks straight. It is the course of nature. The leaf falls from the tree and seeks the embrace of the earth. What is the daughter of the chief in whose wigwam Le-a-pah would sing?"

"He is only a young brave," began the girl, timidly.

"Youth is not a crime," interrupted the chief; "nor would I give my child to a brave whose hairs are like the snow in color. Spring should not sit in the lap of Winter, else her blood will be chilled into ice—it is bad."

"The young brave is not yet a great warrior, but he has a heart as big as a bear, and no white plume is bound up in his scalp-locks. He will be a great chief when years come heavy upon his head," said the girl, cheered by the encouraging words of the great chief.

"Let the great chief speak of the deed that must be done to win the hand of Le-a-pah."

"Yes."

"Let my young brave try to kill the Wolf Demon. If he draws one drop of blood from the scourge of the Shawnees, he shall have the daughter of the great chief."

A look of fierce determination settled upon the face of the young warrior.

"The Shawnee warrior accepts the offer," he said, firmly. "He will seek for the Wolf Demon in the wood. He will search for him as the panther searches for the red chief that steals its cub. If mortal hands can take the life of the Shawnee terror, then he shall fall by the knife of the White Dog."

"It is good!" cried Ke-ne-ha-ha, and a look of satisfaction came over his face. "Let the young warrior perform the service and the great chief of the Shawnee nation will give him his child."

"The White Dog will seek the Wolf Demon at once."

Then the warrior turned upon his heel and left the wigwam.

Therein he saw written both courage and skill.

"The young brave would have the daughter of Ke-ne-ha-ha to sing in his wigwam?"

"The chief speaks straight," replied the young warrior, firmly.

"The love of pure girl is priceless; no treasure like it on the earth; it is the greatest blessing that Manitou ever gave to his red children. What will the young warrior give or do to win the singing bird?"

"He will give his life for Le-a-pah; do all possible things. Let the chief speak—tell of the service that he wishes the young warrior to do," said the Shawnee, promptly.

"Once in the forest, dead, a prey to the wolves, she never more will rival me."

"Wal, I don't know but what I like it better than way myself. It'll worry Girty, and that will jest suit me," said Kendrick, thoughtfully.

"She can not return."

"That's true ag'in."

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THE TALE OF A TAILOR.

BY JOE JOY, JR.

Some fourteen hundred thousand
A tailor loved Miss Jean; his name
Was Mr. So-and-so.

My dear," said he, "it seems to me
You are an angel fair;
And oh, the love I bear for you
Is warranted to wear.

Yen are a grease-spot on my mind
That never will remove;
My heart indeed would be of rock
If you I did not love.

• Cupid's coatline I move;
To you my spirit leans;
Though fortune can be far away
My heart is always Jean's.

My love it binds me unto you;
And I will give my all
I am not making up a lie
To-day out of whole cloth.

But ah, the maid disdained his suit—
"I trower," answered she,
That you're a pantomimic;
So don't talk new to me!"

This was the unkindest cut of all;
His suit had proved a sack;
He took to writing poetry;
His measures hope did lack.

He saw he could not win his wife,
His love was very severe;
Gained his in-sensors all day long,
And occasionally swore.

He quickly lost his appetite;
For cabbages had no eye—
Refused to dine from fashion-plates,
And then resolved to dye.

He drove ten thousand needles straight
Into his mournful breast—
Made a needle-enclosure of himself—
And mold on him was pressed.

Strange Stories.

THE BURIED TREASURE.
A NEW ENGLAND LEGEND.

BY AGILE PENNE.

In the town of Branford, Connecticut, close to the shore washed by the waters of Long Island Sound, lived Ethan Sneed, a retired merchant.

Sneed was a man of large property, and something of a miser in his disposition. A single child only called him father; a young and beautiful girl.

Naturally Abigail Sneed did not want for lovers, as she was not only young, charming in face and form, blessed with an excellent disposition, but was also the heiress of her father's wealth.

In regard to the suitors of the heiress, it was the old story repeated; her father had chosen the son of a rich neighbor, who was heir not only to his father's wealth, but to his surly manners and clannish habits, while the bright-eyed girl had, with all of youth's willfulness, fixed her affections upon a young and handsome captain of a fishing-smack that sailed from Stony Creek.

Reuben Detham owned little in the world besides the Pearl, as the little fishing sloop was named, and a poor three acres of ground, whereon stood the cottage where his mother lived. But Reuben was stout of limb and fair in face; a bronzed sea-master, who had been bred from boyhood to the roaring main, and who knew not the meaning of the word, fear.

Old Sneed had told the young sailor, promptly and plumply, that his daughter was not for him.

Abigail had cried until her eyes were red, for she dared not disobey her father, much as she loved young Reuben, and the captain of the fishing smack had hoisted sail and passed to sea on a trip for profit beyond the frowning Thimble Islands.

Old Sneed felt rejoiced when he saw the white sail of the Pearl bend to the breeze, and gazed upon the foamy wake the little vessel left behind her. He feared a lover's prayers and a maiden's powers of resistance.

Then, as the day was mild and the waters calm, old Sneed hurried down to the water's edge, entered his boat, took the oars and put to sea on a trip for profit beyond the frowning Thimble Islands.

Old Sneed felt rejoiced when he saw the white sail of the Pearl bend to the breeze, and gazed upon the foamy wake the little vessel left behind her. He feared a lover's prayers and a maiden's powers of resistance.

To all his neighbors—and there were not many folks in Branford at the time we write of, the year 1760—it was a mystery why old Sneed spent so much time in his boat paddling around the Thimble Islands, but some wise heads shrewdly suspected that the old miser had heard the story of the buried treasure of Kid, the pirate, who but a short time before had been hung from the fore yard-arm of one of his majesty's ships.

The story went that Kid was wont to rendezvous upon one of the Thimble group, and that he buried vast stores of treasure in some secret spot upon the island.

Of course the treasure had been sought for, but without avail.

The suspicion of the gossips was correct. Night and day thoughts of the buried treasure of the bloody pirate, Robert Kid, were ever in the mind of the miser.

By day he thought of the vast sum of broad Spanish gold-pieces, wrested from the gallions of the south, that the pirate was reputed to have hidden in the bosom of old mother earth, and by night, in his dreams, he looked upon great heaps of glittering gems, worthy to glister in the diadem of an eastern king, that the remorseless robber had stolen from lordly knight and gentle lady upon the bosom of the rolling ocean.

If he could only discover the hiding-place of the treasure, no monarch on earth could compare with him, a New World prince, in wealth.

So old Sneed rowed from island to island, carefully seeking on each one for traces of the buried treasure.

One island, by common report, had been designated as the one where the treasure had been buried, and a little sandy bay had received the title of Kid's Harbor.

Old Sneed was not a firm believer in this theory, though the pirate had buried his treasure on Money Island, but thought it more likely that the crafty villain would have sought one of the lesser islands as a treasure house, rather than the one to which he commonly resorted.

Sneed's search so far had proved a fruitless one, and, as he dipped the oars in the shimmering tide, he watched the bright drops falling back to the parent flood, and wondered if the buried jewels of the pirate were larger than they.

Mentally he regretted that he did not know where to procure one of the famous divining-rods, which were said to be infallible in designating the hiding-place of buried treasures.

If he could only get his hands upon one of those wonderful rods there was no doubt that it would at once reveal to him the exact spot where the pirate had hidden his ill-gotten wealth.

This day Sneed had resolved to spend in searching the surface of Money Island thoroughly; and, as he pulled up toward the little sandy cove, judge of his dismay when he beheld a boat drawn up beyond the reach of the tide upon the beach.

A horrible suspicion seized upon him. What if the stranger or strangers, who had come in the boat, had discovered the pirate's treasure?

With wonderful nimbleness for one so old as Sneed, he forced his boat up on the beach, jumped out, drew it up beyond the reach of the waves, and ran up upon the rocky ledge beyond the cove.

As he had expected, there were strangers upon the island. Two men, bending low to the ground, were watching a peeled wand of the wood commonly termed Witch Hazel, which was curiously balanced upon a forked stick.

Regardless of all consequences, old Sneed hurried down toward the strangers. If they had discovered the treasures, he was bound to have a share, even at the risk of his life.

The men looked like sailors; one was old and the other young. They started in surprise when they beheld Sneed, and clapped their hands beneath the heavy jackets that they wore, as if in search of weapons.

Then, for the first time, Sneed realized the danger of his position.

But after the strangers had taken a good look at old Sneed, who was now thoroughly frightened and wished that he was safe back again to the main land, their bearing changed.

"By old Neptune, this is the very man!" the elder of the two strangers cried.

"So it is," replied the other.

Sneed was astonished at the recognition, and knew not what to make of it.

"Hello, messmate!" cried the first stranger, "can you guess who we're after?"

"Kid's treasures, I suppose," replied Sneed, who began to gain courage, perceiving that the strangers had not discovered any thing.

"Right, by 'hoosey,'" exclaimed the old sailor, in a tone of wonder. "Harkye, messmate, we'll do the fair thing by you, for you are the only man who can get the pirate's treasure. You see me and my shipmate went to a fortune-teller in York, and she gave us this divining-rod, and told us that on this island Kid buried his treasure, but that the rod would only show the spot to a man who had sought the treasure for over seven weeks, seven days, and seven hours."

"I'm the man!" cried Sneed, eagerly, "I have sought for it over that time."

"Yes, the fortune-teller said that if we went to the island and tried to find the treasure, that just such a man as you are would come to us, and that in his hands the rod would work. Now, mate, we want to act honest; if you'll work the rod, we'll give you one-half."

"No, no, I must have two-thirds!" cried Sneed, who saw that he had the best of the bargain.

After some expostulation, which failed to move the miser a jot from his way, the two sailors consented.

"Now, let me try!" cried Sneed, trembling with excitement.

"No, mate, no use till midnight!" the sailor replied. "We'll stay on the island, you can go home and then come back."

To this Sneed strongly objected; he was not going to leave the island until the treasure was discovered. Besides, it was already late in the afternoon, and it would not be many hours to midnight.

Then the sailor suggested that Sneed's household would become alarmed at his prolonged absence and search for him.

Sneed at once explained that his daughter had gone to New Haven to visit a friend and would not return for three days, and that the neighbors would be apt to think that he had gone with her, and assuredly would not trouble themselves to look for him.

So that all agreed that it was better that Sneed should wait.

Darkness came; Sneed never felt a bit hungry, for he could think of nothing but the treasure which would soon be his.

The old sailor calculated the hours by the moon which rose at eleven, and when twelve o'clock came, Sneed tried the magic wand, and it pointed to almost the same spot where the sailors had thought of digging.

Sneed grabbed the spade and set to work.

The moment the iron entered the ground, the sailors yelled in affright, cried out that they saw a ghost, pushed Sneed over on his face, and ran down to the beach, jumped one in each boat, and pulled lustily away, leaving Sneed alone on the island without means of getting off. In vain he implored the strangers to return. In five minutes they were out of sight and hearing. Then Sneed returned to dig for the treasure. Six inches down he struck the rock which forbade all progress. Too late he began to believe the treasure a humbug.

When morning light came, Sneed was almost famished; great was his joy when Reuben and his smack came beating up round the island. He hailed the smack, but the fisherman refused to aid Sneed unless he consented to his daughter marrying the man of her choice. It was a bitter pill, but better than to starve to death, and so Sneed consented.

After Reuben was fast married the truth leaked out: the two treasure-seekers were men hired by Reuben, and the miser had been duped. The trick cured him though of any further search for Kid's buried treasures.

To all his neighbors—and there were not many folks in Branford at the time we write of, the year 1760—it was a mystery why old Sneed spent so much time in his boat paddling around the Thimble Islands, but some wise heads shrewdly suspected that the old miser had heard the story of the buried treasure of Kid, the pirate, who but a short time before had been hung from the fore yard-arm of one of his majesty's ships.

The story went that Kid was wont to rendezvous upon one of the Thimble group, and that he buried vast stores of treasure in some secret spot upon the island.

Of course the treasure had been sought for,

but without avail.

The suspicion of the gossips was correct. Night and day thoughts of the buried treasure of the bloody pirate, Robert Kid, were ever in the mind of the miser.

By day he thought of the vast sum of broad Spanish gold-pieces, wrested from the gallions of the south, that the pirate was reputed to have hidden in the bosom of old mother earth, and by night, in his dreams, he looked upon great heaps of glittering gems, worthy to glister in the diadem of an eastern king, that the remorseless robber had stolen from lordly knight and gentle lady upon the bosom of the rolling ocean.

If he could only discover the hiding-place of the treasure, no monarch on earth could compare with him, a New World prince, in wealth.

So old Sneed rowed from island to island, carefully seeking on each one for traces of the buried treasure.

One island, by common report, had been designated as the one where the treasure had been buried, and a little sandy bay had received the title of Kid's Harbor.

Old Sneed was not a firm believer in this theory, though the pirate had buried his treasure on Money Island, but thought it more likely that the crafty villain would have sought one of the lesser islands as a treasure house, rather than the one to which he commonly resorted.

Sneed's search so far had proved a fruitless one, and, as he dipped the oars in the shimmering tide, he watched the bright drops falling back to the parent flood, and wondered if the buried jewels of the pirate were larger than they.

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A faint blush surged lightly to Una's face; then her proud upper lip curled itself most unmercifully.

"Harry Geoffrey! You are very much mistaken. When I accept an offer of marriage it will be from—well, not Mr. Gregory."

"From who, dear? I beg you to tell me," and Retta sprung up from her reclining position, a white pillar setting all over her face.

"Why, what is the matter, Retta? You are surely faint—and I don't wonder, the way you lay awake nights, and the miserable breakfasts you take. Will you have my salts?"

She arose to reach for them, but Retta interposed her hand.

"Oh, no! I am not at all ill. Am I pale? Go on with what we were talking about."

"Oh, yes," returned Una, "it was of marriage, and I imagined—only for a moment, you know—that you would faint because you thought I was going to say I wouldn't have anybody but Owen Kinneleigh—that charming Welsh gentleman, you remember. Oh, isn't he splendid, isn't—Retta! what is the matter? I shall ring for pa at once."

"Please don't; wait just a minute and I will tell you."

Miss Geoffrey's words were low and sweet as they always were; but Una heard the burden of anguish they carried, just as plainly as she saw the same grief in her wistful eyes.

"I am very weak and unwomanly, I fear," she said, after a moment; "but I never hear his name without just such emotion. Oh, Una! Una! how I worshipped Owen Kinneleigh once! And I never dreamed you would care for him."

Una gazed in amazement at the white face, and the pale lips that uttered the quick, passionate words; and then a bright flush began to encircle her own face. She knelt down beside the lounge, and wound her arms around Miss Geoffrey's neck.

"Retta, I see it all now—all the sleepless nights, the untasted meals, the weeping of your dear eyes when you thought I didn't know; and all for Owen Kinneleigh! Retta," and the voice sunk to a murmur, "does he love you?"

"How can I tell?" she returned, almost angrily. "He said so, and then, because I—because we quarreled—he went away and left me. And for a long time I have never seen or heard. You call the summer 'long and weary'; what think you it is to me?"

Una, for reply, curled and caressed the tiny spires of hair that lay like jetty tendrils on Retta's white forehead. Then, after a long, long silence, she broke it.

"Retta, darling, I will forget Owen Kinneleigh, and you shall forget what I said. And now, help me decide on my summer's escapade—for a jolly escapade I am determined it shall be."

A spacious bedroom, over whose two western windows climbed vagrant honeysuckle vines, that perfumed with such subtle sweetness the air that stirred the white dainty curtains, and gently rustled the sides of the old-fashioned patch-work quilt that covered the high, four-post bed. A wide strip of home-made carpet was laid beside the bed; a similar piece in front of the cherry washstand, which with the tiny glass that hung over it did double duty for toilette stand and dressing-case.

A Boston rocking-chair was invitingly urged one to occupy it beside our shady window, and as Mrs. Olmstead, the thrifty farmer's wife, showed the "new girl" her clean, sweet, countrified bedroom, and left her to don strict working attire before she descended to the kitchen, and went down-stairs herself, the remarkably self-possessed help settled herself in that chair with a grace and dignity very unlike "Annie Smith," but had Harry Geoffrey, or Mr. Owen Kinneleigh happened to have been about, they would have said very like "Miss Una Penrose." And, Miss Una Penrose was, actually launched on that "jolly escapade" of hers; positively "hired out" for not less than a month to Mrs. Olmstead, who kept the select boarding-house at "Sunset Light" for the few permanent, and numerous transient guests who honored her.

You would not have known Una. That is, you would have been astonished at the equally provoking likeness and unlikeness: you would be just about tempted to speak to her and say, "Miss Penrose! Is it possible?" and then a second searching glance and a spark of anger from her blue eyes, and you would bow, and stammer, and mutter something about "craving Miss Annie's pardon;" but really the resemblance was so pointed; etc., etc., etc. She sat looking out over the broad meadow, covered with short, sweet pasture, at the wide-spread fields of ripening oats, that waved and swayed with such matchless grace as the wind swept softly over it; at the vast stretch of timberland, that bound the landscape like emeralds incasing a choicer gem, and over, and around, and above all, at the hills that towered in a soft, blue-gray haze that lent sweet enchantment to the shadows, chasing the sunlight from wooded base peeks.

And Una felt the silent voices of Nature commanding with her as never before, even though she had stood on the Pacific shore, and picked up shells on old Atlantic's beach; though from the Jungfrau she had watched the sun come up, and on the top of Mount Washington watched it go down. Then she was the desirable Miss Penrose, the heiress, the beauty, the walk, manner, dress, conversation were mimicked by lesser lights; now—this—with a swelling exuberance of joy in her heart—now she was going to drink deep at the same fountain of joy that humans less favored than herself had been quaffing from. What would she taste in her peeks?</p